

## PPS FLIER CONTENT

A number of Portland Public Schools families have expressed concern about students playing on school properties and using vegetables grown in school gardens in light of the state's investigation of metals emissions in Southeast and North Portland.

While risk of negative short- and long-term health effects due to exposures to these metals is low, we understand that families are concerned. Therefore, we want to provide some suggestions for simple steps people can take to further reduce their risk. They are as follows:

### **Are there precautions that students playing on the playground should take?**

No special precautions need to be taken for students playing outdoors at any PPS facilities related to Bullseye or other glass manufacturers in the city. Emissions from the facilities to air have stopped, so the air at area schools are expected to have the same air quality as anywhere else in the city. Exposures to metals through soil are many times less than through air because the soil has to actually be swallowed in order for metals to enter the body. Metals do not pass through the skin, and once associated with soil, any dust that is stirred up into air has particles too large to go into the lungs and are trapped in the nose and upper airways when inhaled.

### **What about students coming into a school building or home after playing on a school playground?**

As a general practice, all students should be encouraged to wash their hands after playing outdoors, after using the restroom, and before eating.

### **Are fruit and vegetables grown in school gardens safe to eat?**

Yes. Metals concentrations are generally many times lower inside vegetables than in the soil they are grown in. OHA's Healthy Gardening fact sheet ([link to](#)) applies to gardens at PPS facilities. Children should be encouraged to wash their hands after working in the soil, and produce should be thoroughly washed prior to consumption.

### **Do we need to be concerned or test dust in our facilities (wipe test) for cadmium and arsenic?**

A better use of resources would be to ensure that regular cleaning is occurring to prevent the accumulation of dust in PPS facilities. Wet cleaning methods, or vacuuming with HEPA-equipped equipment, would reduce the amount of dust that gets stirred up into the air during cleaning.

For more information on the investigation of metals emissions by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, the Oregon Health Authority and Multnomah County Health Department, call 211, write to [EHAP.Info@state.or.us](mailto:EHAP.Info@state.or.us), or visit the following websites devoted to this issue:

- DEQ: [www.deq.state.or.us/nwr/metalsemissions.htm](http://www.deq.state.or.us/nwr/metalsemissions.htm)
- OHA: [www.healthoregon.org/metalsemissions](http://www.healthoregon.org/metalsemissions)
- MCHD: <https://multco.us/air-quality-community-concern>